

Appl. No. 10/802,334
Amdt. Dated Aug. 29, 2005
Reply to Office Action of April 29, 2005

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AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A patient registration kiosk system that allows patients to self-register for an appointment with a healthcare provider, comprising:
 - a self-register patient identification mechanism provided on said kiosk for uniquely identifying a patient so that information relevant to that patient can be retrieved from a healthcare provider database for review by the patient;
 - a user interface that presents the retrieved patient information to the patient and allows the patient to update the information as necessary, thereby maintaining current patient information in the database;
 - an insurance plan identification mechanism for identifying insurance plan information including a payor associated with the patient, for review and updating by the patient at the kiosk thereby maintaining current insurance information in the database;
 - an eligibility confirmation interface for forming an electronic communication link between the payor and the patient at the kiosk ~~healthcare provider~~, wherein the payor responds to eligibility confirmation requests sent by the ~~healthcare provider~~ patient and the healthcare provider confirms the patient's eligibility for coverage by the payor, prior to the appointment, based on the identified insurance plan information, over the electronic communication link; and
 - an insurance card scanner at said kiosk adapted to generate an image of each side of an insurance card associated with the patient for storage in the database.
2. (Currently Amended) The kiosk system of claim 1 further comprising:
 - an output device for providing a receipt relevant to the patient's registration appointment, the receipt including at least one of eligibility for coverage by the payor and an office co-pay amount confirmed by the payor and further including at least one of the group consisting of: patient name, unique patient identification number, insurance plan, insurance identification number, insurance type, and primary care physician.

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3. (Original) The kiosk system of claim 1 wherein the patient identification mechanism includes one of a barcode scanner and a card reader.
4. (Original) The kiosk system of claim 1 wherein the user interface includes a touch screen graphical user interface that allows the patient to interact with the kiosk system.
5. (Currently Amended) The kiosk system of claim 1 wherein the insurance plan identification mechanism includes one of a barcode scanner, and a card reader and/or a scanner with optical character recognition (OCR) capabilities.
6. (Currently Amended) The kiosk system of claim 1 wherein the eligibility confirmation interface forms part of an electronic data interchange (EDI) between the ~~healthcare provider~~ patient and the payor.
7. (Previously Presented) The kiosk system of claim 1 further comprising:
a processor in communication with one or more of the patient identification mechanism, the user interface, the insurance plan identification mechanism, the eligibility confirmation interface, and the insurance card scanner, wherein the processor is configured for controlling functionality of the kiosk system.
8. (Original) The kiosk system of claim 1 wherein the kiosk system is coupled to a network that includes at least one of a front desk workstation and a billing workstation, with each workstation having access to the database.
9. (Original) The kiosk system of claim 1 wherein the kiosk system is coupled to a network that includes a server that communicatively couples the database to the kiosk system.
10. (Currently Amended) The kiosk system of claim 9 wherein the server communicatively couples the database and the kiosk system to ~~[[a]]~~ an information/billing system associated with the healthcare provider.
11. (Currently Amended) The kiosk system of claim 10 wherein the eligibility confirmation interface is initiated by the patient at the kiosk and operates in conjunction with the

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server and the information/billing system to form the electronic communication link between the ~~healthcare provider~~ patient and the payor to confirm the patient's eligibility for coverage.

12. (Currently Amended) A patient registration kiosk system that allows patients to self-register for prior to an appointment with a healthcare provider, comprising:

- a barcode scanner and/or card reader coupled to said kiosk for uniquely identifying a patient so that information relevant to that patient can be retrieved from a healthcare provider database, wherein said patient engages said scanner and/or card reader;
- a user interface of said kiosk that presents the retrieved information to the patient and allows the patient to update the information as necessary, thereby maintaining current patient information in the database;
- a card reader coupled to said kiosk allowing said patient to engage the reader for identifying insurance plan information and eligibility of the patient including a payor associated with the patient, thereby maintaining current insurance information in the database;
- an eligibility confirmation interface for forming an electronic communication link between the payor and the ~~patient healthcare provider~~, wherein the payor responds to eligibility confirmation requests sent by the ~~healthcare provider~~ patient at the kiosk, and allowing the healthcare provider to confirm ~~confirms~~ the patient's eligibility for coverage by the payor, prior to the appointment, based on the identified insurance plan information, over the electronic communication link;
- an insurance card scanner for generating an image of each side of an insurance card associated with the patient for storage in the database and/or for capturing optical character recognition (OCR) data for identification of the insurance information, and
- an output device for providing a paper receipt relevant to the patient's appointment, the receipt including at least one of patient name, unique patient identifier, insurance

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payor name, plan name or type, patient insurance member number, eligibility confirmation, and office co-pay amount.

13. (Original) The kiosk system of claim 12 wherein the user interface includes a touch screen graphical user interface.

14. (Previously Presented) The kiosk system of claim 12 further comprising:
a processor in communication with one or more of the barcode scanner, the user interface, the card reader, the eligibility confirmation interface, and the insurance card scanner, wherein the processor is configured for controlling functionality of the kiosk system.

15. (Original) The kiosk system of claim 12 wherein the kiosk system is coupled to a network that includes at least one of a front desk workstation and a billing workstation, with each workstation having access to the database.

16. (Currently Amended) The kiosk system of claim 12 wherein the kiosk system is coupled to a network that includes a kiosk server that communicatively couples the healthcare provider database, the kiosk system, and a billing system associated with the healthcare provider, wherein the eligibility confirmation interface operates in conjunction with the kiosk server and the billing system to form the communication link between the patient healthcare provider and the payor to confirm the patient's eligibility for coverage.

17. (Currently Amended) A patient registration kiosk system that allows patients to self-register prior to an appointment with a healthcare provider, comprising:

a patient identification mechanism for uniquely identifying a patient so that information relevant to that patient can be retrieved from a healthcare provider database by said patient at said kiosk;

a user interface that presents the retrieved information to the patient and allows the patient to update the information as necessary, thereby maintaining current patient information in the database;

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an insurance plan identification mechanism for identifying insurance plan information and eligibility of the patient including a payor associated with the patient, wherein said patient reviews and updates said insurance plan information at the kiosk at each visit, thereby maintaining current insurance information in the database, and wherein the insurance plan identification mechanism includes one of a barcode scanner, a card reader and/or a scanner with optical character recognition (OCR) capabilities; and

an eligibility confirmation interface for forming an electronic communication link between the payor and the ~~patient healthcare provider~~, wherein the payor responds to eligibility confirmation requests sent by the ~~healthcare provider~~ patient at the kiosk and the ~~payor healthcare provider~~ confirms the patient's eligibility for coverage by the payor, prior to the appointment, based on the identified insurance plan information, over the electronic communication link, and wherein the eligibility confirmation interface forms part of an electronic data interchange (EDI) between the patient and the payor.

18. (Currently Amended) The kiosk system of claim 17 wherein the kiosk system is coupled to a network that includes a kiosk server that communicatively couples the healthcare provider database to the kiosk system.

19. (Currently Amended) The kiosk system of claim 18 wherein the kiosk server has electronic access to current payor provider manuals to enable healthcare provider staff to refer to on-line insurance plan benefits of said patient to immediately confirm benefit coverage.

20. (Currently Amended) The kiosk system of claim 18 wherein the kiosk server has electronic access to sample insurance card images associated with one or more payors on a payor database.

21. (Currently Amended) The kiosk system of claim 17 wherein at least one of a network and a kiosk server communicatively couple the healthcare provider database and the kiosk system to a billing system associated with the healthcare provider.

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22. (Currently Amended) The kiosk system of claim 21 wherein the eligibility confirmation interface operates in conjunction with the kiosk server and the billing system to establish electronic communication between the healthcare provider and the payor to confirm the patient's eligibility for coverage.

23. (Original) The kiosk system of claim 17 wherein the kiosk system is coupled to a network that includes at least one of a front desk workstation and a billing workstation, with each workstation having access to the database.

24. (Original) The kiosk system of claim 23 wherein each workstation has electronic access to current versions of payor provider manuals and sample insurance card images.

25. (Original) The kiosk system of claim 23 wherein at least one of the workstations is adapted to provide a split-screen display that allows a staff member of the healthcare provider to compare images of an insurance card associated with the patient with sample insurance card images provided by the payor.

26. (Original) The kiosk system of claim 17 further comprising a payment-intake mechanism configured to receive payment including at least one of a co-pay and an outstanding balance associated with the patient.

27. (Currently Amended) The kiosk system of claim 17 wherein the eligibility confirmation interface further allows the payor ~~healthcare provider~~ to confirm a co-pay associated with the patient.

28. (Currently Amended) The kiosk system of claim 17 wherein the eligibility confirmation interface further allows the healthcare provider to view on-line provider information, and to confirm particular plan benefits associated with the patient.

29. (Original) The kiosk system of claim 17 wherein the identified insurance plan information further includes a specific plan associated with the patient.